PLAS - O - GRAM <99-16> PLAS Version 9.0.4 Deployment Plan

PLAS Advocates,

PLAS Version 9.0.4 is here!   Well, almost!!

When will the PLAS 9.0.4 Demo be available to use for training? The demo will be posted on the Downloads page (Section 4) of the PLAS web site on Wednesday, 27 October. The Process codes shown in the demo should be considered as 'draft' although they are close to being finalized. All SmartPLAS rules are green for the demo.

When will the real Version 9.0.4 hit the streets?   The plan is as follows. The Oracle based version of 9.0.4 is in final testing now and this week we will be making the necessary changes to your databases to receive the new version. (PLAS versions 9.0.2, 9.0.3 and 9.0.4 will all function correctly after the changes to the databases are made. So regardless of the version in use by any of your reporters, PLAS will continue to work.) Anticipating that testing will be complete by October 29th, we plan to send PLAS Version 9.0.4 to the Districts to be available for Tivoli installation starting Monday, 1 November.

Note: The Tivoli installation procedures involve sending the PLAS 9.0.4 software from the District HQ to a local CAO server to be available for updating individual desktop PCs. Since you may not have completed your training, you will have to coordinate the specific dates and locations for 9.0.4 deployment with your local LAN managers to ensure that your PLAS users are trained and ready to handle the functionality of new version. Your CAO's deployment of 9.0.4 must be completed by December 1, 1999.

We will post 9.0.4 upgrade files, complete 9.0.4 installation files, and the PLAS Version 9.0.4 Supplemental User's Manual on our web site no later than Friday, 5 November.

What are the new features of PLAS 9.0.4?   Major PLAS 9.0.4 features are outlined on the fourth page of this POG. For more complete explanations along with examples and PLAS screen prints, refer to the PLAS/Unit Cost Workshop presentations at http://www.dcmc.hq.dla.mil/teaminfo/AQB/conf/index.htm. The presentation titled "PLAS Functionality Changes for FY00" has been updated with revised PLAS 9.0.4 screen prints and added features for use in local training.

Also, accompanying this POG is a handout (Easy904.ppt) describing the primary new features of PLAS 9.0.4 and some details on the three biggest changes from the user's perspective: (1) collecting "Multiple" program codes, (2) Charging to an organization "Other than Assigned", and (3), Process Drilldown & Task Collection. We suggest you make copies available to all of your users before/during your local training to give them an idea of what's new for 9.0.4.   The single greatest change affecting the greatest number of users is the ability to collect more than one Program Code. Users who will receive PLAS 9.0.4 without prior training should be notified about this feature.

Please note that three additional features have been added to PLAS 9.0.4 since the workshops and should be briefed in your local training as appropriate:

- **Expanded Tool Tips** – Right clicking on a PLAS Process Code while a pull down list is open will open a list all of the One-Book Tasks associated with that process. This feature replaces PLAS Help Screen listings of Tasks.

- **Password Changes** – To comply with DCMC requirements, future changes to PLAS passwords will be checked against standard password rules, such as requiring 6-16 characters, must have a number embedded within the string (e.g., plas4me), etc.. Although there is no need to do wholesale changes at initial implementation, whenever a user changes a password in the future they will be prompted to conform to the new rules.

- **User Setup "Cache & Trace Settings**" - Both of these features are diagnostic tools and should be used only when directed by the local PLAS Administrator. A detailed explanation of these features will be included in the 9.0.4 Supplemental User's Manual.

What do I, as a PLAS Admin, need to do to make 9.0.4 work? Glad you asked! Although the 9.0.4 installation will be invisible to you, to take full advantage of 9.0.4's features you, as the PLAS Administrator, should plan for the following:

- **Alternate Supervisor Role**: Identify supervisors and organizations, notify personnel involved and update employee data in the EMPLOYEE_SUPERVISED_BRANCH option in PLAS Maintenance. Use this feature only for cases where Supervisors and Timekeepers routinely participate in PLAS input and data reviews across organizational lines.

- **Organization 'Other Than Assigned'**: Identify CAOs receiving support, identify employees providing support, and use the EMPLOYEE_OTA_BRANCH option in Maintenance to enable employees and identify receiving CAOs. As discussed at the workshop, this feature is only for support provided by your CAO to another CAO in your District and only for situations where the support to be provided is documented by General Order. Although no action is required by the PLAS Administrator at the receiving location, you should coordinate with the receiving PLAS and/or Unit Cost managers.

- **Contract Kind Hide**: Working with your Unit Cost Manager, determine if your CAO's contract administration workload allows you to hide specific contract kinds when no contracts of that kind exist in MOCAS. Changes are made in the CONTRACT_KIND_HIDE Maintenance option.

- **Multiple Program Codes**: You'll have a maximum of two Local Program Code columns. All current local codes will initially show in Column 1; Column 2 will not be displayed. Decide how to apportion your codes between the two columns (i.e. hardware programs vrs special data collection) understanding that users may select only one code from each column. In other words, if you have codes that can be used simultaneously, you will need two columns to do that (e.g., "Other NAVY Programs" and a local performance contract item "Improve Delivery Performance"). To activate the second program column, simply reassign any of your local program codes to the second PROGRAM_CATEGORY_ID. You also may re-title the two column headings in your maintenance screens using the LOC_PROGRAM_CATEGORY option by changing the Short Descriptions. The (long) Description block is what will appear as a tool tip when your users right click on the Local Program column headings. You are not required to use both columns.

- **Reimbursables:** Identify those employees that need access to reimbursable charging. Ensure these employees have the Reimbursable_Enabled box checked in Employee Maintenance. Work with your ARM (Activity Reimbursable Monitor) to use the new messaging feature for DCARRS users.

The important features of this new release outlined above should be carefully thought through during implementation. You may wish to concentrate your initial efforts on training and full deployment of the new software to all users. Full implementation of all the new features could follow a little later.

What should I include in my PLAS 9.0.4 training? Please make liberal use of PLAS/Unit Cost Workshop presentations available on the Unit Cost Initiative Team page of the DCMC web site. Suggest your training deal with the following topics as a minimum:

- **Multiple Program Codes-** Cover in depth with several examples. Tell associates how your

local program codes were apportioned between the two local code columns, and how both Local and National codes may be selected simultaneously. Discuss the "No Program" option.

- **Pulldown Sort Order** – User can select Process and Program code lists by ID number or alphabetically by name on Timecard screen.
- **Expanded Tool Tips** – Demonstrate how right clicking on a process displays the associated One-Book Tasks.
- **Organization 'Other Than Assigned'-** Cover in depth when relevant; emphasizing the 'how to' for those employees likely to be involved. Remember: the receiving org's local program codes will be available but their reimbursable DCNs won't.
- **Process Task Collection on Demand** – show example of data collection at task level (process codes in the demo followed by > can be drilled to the Task level). Emphasize task level collection will occur only for selected teams for very short time periods. There is no collection of tasks scheduled for initial startup of PLAS 9.0.4..
- **Contract Kind Hide** – Alert associates as to which contract kinds were hidden, if any. Remember, any hidden contract kinds won't be available for OTA situations.
- **Work Codes for RDO** – for a day designed as the regular day off (RDO), the Work Code column default will be blank. Error message is displayed if 'RG' is selected.
- **Alternate Supervisor/Timekeeper Role-** demonstrate for relevant audiences only.
- **Reimbursables** – Demonstrate the three Reimbursable related options carried over from PLAS Version 9.0.3. (1) 'Reimbursable_Enabled' box in Employee Maintenance. (2) 'Always Load Reimbursables' button on each user's Reimbursable palette. (3) 'Load Reimbursables' checkbox on the Timecard screen.
- **Store Future Pay period Tour** – Demonstrate new Tour Data screen displaying 3 pay periods of tour data. Show how to save a future tour as well as designate a favorite tour as 'Default'.
- **Tour Data Mismatch Indicator** – Point out Timecard Match column in Tour Data screen. Colors indicate match or mismatch between tour data and the timecard data for the same period.
- **New Palette for Leave Codes** – Show users how to set up palette for Leave Codes. Emphasize benefits to using all the available palettes.
- **New Password Save Rules** – Alert users to the fact that future changes to PLAS passwords will be checked against standard password rules, such as 6-16 characters, must have a number embedded within the string (e.g., plas4me), etc..

Questions? Contact us at 1-888-PLASINFO or PLASHELP@dcmdw.dla.mil.

Respectfully,

Don Peterson
PLAS Program Manager

Highlights of PLAS Version 9.0.4 Features

Multiple Program Codes – Each hour charged on the Timecard screen may be tied to multiple program codes. There will be five columns (categories) of Program codes – three national and two local. One code may be selected form each program category.

Process Task Collection on Demand – On a selected basis for specific offices for very limited time periods, PLAS can collect data below the process level. Processes are made up of tasks as illustrated by the flow charts at the end of each One Book chapter. When this Task Collection feature is enabled the user will charge time down to the task level.

Sort Order on Timecard Pulldowns – Users may select to display either their Process or Program code pulldown lists sorted numerically by ID or alphabetically by name.

Work Codes for 'RDO' - The work code column for Regular Days Off (RDO) will default to empty. If 'RG' (regular hours) is selected, an error message will appear.

Tour Data Screen Changes - Users will be able to view tour data of the previous, current, and future pay periods. A favorite tour may be set as a 'Default'. The Timecard Match column shows via color codes when there is a mismatch between a specific day's Tour and the Timecard's hours for that day.

Reimbursables – Several changes have been made to save the downloading of reimbursable DSN data when it is not needed.
- **Reimbursable_Enabled** -- Reimbursable DCNs may only be downloaded if the 'Reimbursable_Enabled' button is checked on the Employee Maintenance screen.
- **Always Load Reimbursables** – Reimbursables will be automatically downloaded if the 'Always Load Reimbursables' button is checked on the user's Reimbursables palette.
- **Load Reimbursables** – if not automatically downloaded, the Reimbursables may be downloaded by checking the 'Load Reimbursables' button on the Timecard screen.

Organization 'Other than Assigned' - Records, but does not move, the hours provided to other CAOs. Individuals and receiving organizations must be identified in advance via Maintenance screen. Receiving CAO's local programs will be available for use. Receiving CAO's Reimbursable DCNs will not.

Alternate Supervisor Role – PLAS now allows cross-organizational supervisory and timekeeper privileges within the same CAO. Designated alternates are enabled using Employee Maintenance.

Palette for Leave Codes – Users may select those 3 or 4 frequently used leave codes to include on their palette of leave codes. Saves users from wading through an alphabetical listing of little used codes.

Contract kind 'Local Hide' Feature– CAO may elect to hide Contract kinds for which they have no workload.

Expanded Tool Tips – Right clicking on a PLAS Process Code opens a list of One-Book Tasks associated with that process. This feature replaces PLAS Help Screen listings of Tasks.

Password Changes – Future changes to passwords will be checked against standard password rules, such as 6-16 characters, must have a number embedded within the string (e.g., plas4me), etc..

User Setup "Cache & Trace Settings" - A new screen has been added to User's Setup for these two diagnostic functions. These functions should only be used at the direction of the PLAS administrator.